


IWORK4ME

Initiated by Autism Initiatives Scotland

(Partnership – key individuals from Autism Initiatives, NAS, SSA, IntoWork, Business Enterprise)

Agreed that to move forward an independent organisation should be established around supported self employment for people with autism (and other conditions)

Statement of Purpose
IWORK4ME will exist to support self employment for people who face a significant disadvantage in accessing mainstream self employment support. This is achieved through providing direct support and advice as well as promoting the benefits of self employment.




The Current Position

Go For It!: “self employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities and/or ASD were rare in Scotland”.

Effective supported employment services were placing people in interesting jobs that closely matched their individual preferences, but they were predominantly part-time jobs and in certain sectors suggesting stereotyping of the abilities of people with learning disabilities and/or ASD.


Self employment can mean a closer match between individual preferences and contributions with the job, and a better fit with individual values and lifestyle preferences. As such, self employment has been viewed by some as “the next logical step” in supported employment.

Despite extensive research, including a survey of over 3000 individuals with ASD and/or learning disabilities, *Go For It!* only found two cases of individuals in full-time self employment.




Barriers to Self employment for people with ASC:

- Fear of Losing the Security of Regular Benefit Income
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of access to appropriate training and support
- Access to capital
- Support programmes for disabled people fail to identify or promote self employment as a viable option
- Aftercare




Vision

- That self employment should be an option for people with autism
- That the supports required to investigate, develop and sustain business ideas are available and accessible for people with autism



IWORK4ME will achieve its objectives by:

- Providing a range of direct support projects which support self employment
- Being a voice for supported self employment in Scotland
- Raising awareness of the benefits of self employment and its potential for people facing disadvantages that would usually preclude them for considering self employment as an option
- Providing systems of ongoing support after the business has been established
- Contributing to the network of self employment organisations
- Contributing to the knowledge base of good practice in supported self employment
- Raising funds to achieve these activities



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